



## Indiana's Plan to Ensure Student Literacy by the End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

In March, 2010, the General Assembly passed House Bill 1367 and Governor Daniels signed it into law. This law will result in groundbreaking efforts in Indiana to ensure that students read proficiently before moving on to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. As many researchers and educators have noted, prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students are primarily “learning to read,” but beginning in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, students must be able to “read to learn.” Standards and materials only get more complex from 4<sup>th</sup> grade forward, and students who cannot read proficiently will struggle mightily to catch up in reading skills while trying to master more advanced content. It is for this reason that the new law requires the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) to “develop a plan to improve reading skills of students and implement appropriate remediation techniques,” up to and including retention after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. It is important to state from the outset that it is not the IDOE's goal to retain a single student, but if a student is unable to read at or above grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, retention may be the best option for his or her future. The IDOE's intent is to ensure every student has the opportunity for future success through literacy.

To meet the goal of Indiana students reading proficiently by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, we must strengthen our foundational program in reading. That foundation must enable students to not only become proficient, but to exhibit mastery during K-3 schooling. To that end,

- Standards, instruction and assessment must be precisely aligned;
- Data on every child's progress must be used by teachers to adjust/differentiate their instructional practices;
- Children must be provided effective interventions if they are not making adequate progress so their learning can be accelerated and they can thereby “catch-up” with their peers;
- Teachers must have information about each child's prior learning so transitions from grade-to-grade occur smoothly;
- All students must have the opportunity for acceleration. Children who are performing at or above grade-level must be provided enhanced instruction so their depth of learning can continue;
- Activities to reach state literacy goals must take place at the parent, child, classroom, school and corporation levels;
- Parents must be frequently informed of their children's progress; and
- Teachers must continuously enhance their effectiveness.

This plan, to ensure the literacy of Indiana students by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, includes a description of the state's reading standards in Part I. Part II explains the state's Reading Framework and newly required Reading Plans. Part III examines the plan's fiscal impact.

## PART I: Reading Standards

The world in which we live continues to change. For students to succeed in school, at work, and in their communities, they will need more skills and knowledge than ever before. Recommended by Indiana's Education Roundtable and adopted by the State Board of Education, Indiana's academic standards have been ranked among the best in the nation by Achieve, Inc., the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, the International Center for Leadership in Education, the American Association for the Advancement of Science—Project 2061, and the National Council for History Education. Indiana's K-12 academic standards provide educators and administrators with a full scope and sequence for curriculum alignment.

The current version of Indiana's English/language arts standards, adopted in 2006, begin with a foundation of skills to help children learn to read, and then transition to helping children read and write to learn.

*The reading standards include the following:*

- print concepts
- phonemic awareness
- decoding and word recognition
- vocabulary and concept development
- structural features of informational and technical materials
- analysis of nonfiction, informational and literary text
- structural features of literature

*Writing, listening, and speaking standards, which support reading, include the following:*

- the processes and features of writing
- writing and research applications
- English language conventions
- analysis and evaluation of oral and media communications
- speaking applications

The demand is greater than ever for people who can read, write, think, and speak effectively; analyze problems and set priorities; learn new concepts quickly; take initiative; and work in teams. This demand is the same across state and even national boundaries. While Indiana already has world-class standards, the Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) for states to adopt a set of common standards. Nearly every state, including Indiana, has adopted or plans to adopt the Common Core State Standards as *the* state's standards, in recognition that core skills and knowledge are a basic expectation regardless of where a child lives.

The Common Core State Standards include K-12 College- and Career-Ready Standards in English/language arts and mathematics that define the knowledge and skills students need for success in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses and workforce training programs.

The Common Core State Standards

- are aligned with college and work expectations;
- include rigorous content *and* application of knowledge through higher-order skills;
- build upon strengths and lessons of the current state standards;
- are internationally benchmarked; and
- are evidence- and/or research-based.

Indiana's expectations for literacy achievement are guided by these standards, which undergird this plan to help ensure Indiana students learn to read proficiently by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. An analysis of the Common Core State Standards, as compared to the content of Indiana's Academic Standards, was provided to the Education Roundtable in August of 2010. The Common Core State Standards were then presented to the State Board of Education and adopted in August of 2010. Implementation of the Common Core State Standards will begin during the 2011-2012 school year and will be completely implemented once a multi-state assessment system is fully aligned with the Common Core State Standards—possibly as early as 2014-2015.

## **PART II: Instruction, Remediation and Retention**

### Reading Framework

Indiana partnered with the Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) to develop a K-6 Reading Framework in an effort to create a cohesive, state-wide reading plan aimed at helping all students achieve proficiency in reading. Built upon scientifically-based reading research, the framework summarizes the knowledge and beliefs that should inform reading practices and organize efforts at all levels. Completed and released to schools for the 2010-2011 school year, the Reading Framework will provide guidance for improving reading achievement, as well as preparing students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, postsecondary education and the future workforce. This is not a program or curriculum to purchase, nor is it an approach that will fade as a new fad emerges. It's a research driven process for developing effective reading instruction statewide and producing permanent improvements in student performance.

Under regulations the IDOE and the State Board of Education will promulgate, all elementary schools in Indiana will be required to implement the Reading Framework, unless both of the following criteria are met:

- A current school designation under P.L. 221 in one of the top two performance categories
- Ninety (90) percent of students passing the reading portion of ISTEP+

*A brief synopsis for each chapter of the framework is provided below.*

#### 1. Reading Goals

Measurable reading goals are necessary to drive instruction and determine appropriate assessments. While the most important reading goal is to read at grade level, specific goals in grades K-3 focus on *how to read*, and goals in grades 4-6 include *reading to learn* in relationship to content knowledge.

#### 2. Instruction

Schools must provide effective scientifically-based reading instruction throughout grades K-6. In the early grades, effective reading instruction enables students to develop the foundational reading skills they need to read and learn successfully in school and beyond. In grades 4-6, effective reading instruction ensures students maintain strong foundational reading skills and apply those skills to reading complex material in the content areas.

3. Assessment

To be certain instruction meets the needs of every student and to determine if students are reading proficiently for their grade level and meeting essential formative goals, teachers must have access to and understand how to use valid and reliable reading assessments. Each school's reading plan should include a comprehensive system of screening measures to identify students at risk, progress monitoring tools to ensure students are on track, and summative assessments to determine student mastery.

4. Professional Development

Professional development is the vehicle used to provide teachers with the support, knowledge and skills they need to deliver effective, high-quality instruction in the classroom. Teacher quality, and the extent to which teachers receive ongoing training and support, make a significant difference in student achievement.

5. Leadership

Effective building leaders make student attainment of grade level reading goals a priority by vigorously supporting teachers as they provide classroom instruction that meets student needs. Leadership must be distributed among different individuals and groups within the school to develop shared responsibility. Effective building leaders ensure sufficient time for planning instruction and regularly observe classroom reading blocks to monitor how reading instruction is delivered and to provide support for implementation.

6. Commitment

Providing the instruction necessary for all students to read at grade level requires a school-wide commitment to the implementation of scientifically-based reading instruction. State education leaders, corporation leaders and school leaders must do whatever it takes to deliver on the goal of ensuring all students learn to read proficiently. This requires motivating the entire school community, including staff, board members, and parents; dedicating the necessary resources and time to get the job done; reporting data to the public; adhering to clear accountability measures; establishing and following problem-solving processes; sharing responsibility to implement a comprehensive reading program; and implementing a reading plan with fidelity so all students will be successful.

Pursuant to regulations the IDOE and the State Board of Education will promulgate, all schools will be required to annually submit a Reading Plan as part of their School Improvement Plan, which supports research-based reading instruction for each of their elementary schools. The Reading Plan must accurately depict and detail the role of corporation and building leadership, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and assessment in the support of student learning. In accordance with the new state law, corporations receiving state remediation funds should use those funds to make the focus on early reading skills and remediation a priority.

*The Reading Plan must include the following:*

- leadership plans at the corporation and school level to guide and support scientifically-based reading research practices aligned with state policies
- clear and measurable student achievement goals
- appropriate research-based core and intervention instructional materials aligned to strategies addressing specific student needs
- a description of how data will be analyzed and used in order to drive instructional decision-making
- professional development plans to ensure systemic PD that is targeted at individual teacher needs, as determined by analysis of student performance data

*Each Reading Plan must consist of the following elements:*

1. Formation of a Reading Leadership Team at each elementary school

The Reading Plan must detail who will serve on the team and the role of each team member, ensuring that all student groups are represented. The focus of the Reading Leadership Team should be aligned with the school improvement plan so the two plans are merged and are fully in agreement with each other.

*Duties may consist of, but are not limited to, the following:*

- collecting and analyzing data
- providing instructional support
- studying scientifically-based reading research
- developing a school-based elementary reading plan
- facilitating research-based professional development, including implementation of study groups
- modeling lessons in classrooms
- selecting interventions proven by research to be effective with specific subgroups for specific needs
- researching and selecting a core program based on student needs, including English language development instruction for English language learners
- ensuring coordination between core instruction and federal program area services (i.e., Title I, Title III, IDEA), as appropriate
- reviewing progress of the Reading Plan with school staff and the school board, addressing implementation and attainment of goals

As a component of the Reading Plan, each school will report rosters of Reading Leadership Team members to the IDOE. Corporations must ensure that all stakeholders are represented in the development of the elementary Reading Plan.

2. Measurable student achievement goals

- Action steps clearly articulated for goal obtainment by the completion of each grade level

### 3. Reading instruction for all students in kindergarten through third grade

- Plans must ensure that elementary schools offer reading instruction in a dedicated, uninterrupted minimum 90-minute block of time daily to all students. The reading block will include whole-group instruction utilizing a core reading program and small-group differentiated instruction to meet individual student needs. Schools with half day kindergarten programs must ensure 90 minutes of reading instruction are provided daily, but they do not have to be uninterrupted. Safeguarding reading instructional time should still be a priority.
- Plans must identify a research-based core reading program that teaches the five components of scientifically-based reading instruction, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, to all students. Schools with English Language Learners (ELLs) must include a description of how English language development instruction is incorporated into the core reading program. Schools must select, adopt and fully-implement the core reading program with fidelity according to the Reading Framework.

Elementary schools meeting both of the following criteria are not required to implement a core research-based reading program:

- A current school designation under P.L. 221 in one of the top two performance categories; and
- 90% of students pass the reading portion of the ISTEP+.

Schools taking advantage of this flexibility must describe their plan for reading instruction, including the intervention for those students reading below grade level in elementary grades. The IDOE seeks this information so it can publicize programs that appear to provide, based on student achievement results, the greatest effect for Hoosier students.

### 4. An Assessment Plan

As reading assessment can take many forms, both formative and summative assessments should play a role in each school's Reading Plan. The Reading Plan should indicate whether the school will utilize Wireless Generation's *mCLASS*® tools, which enable teachers to measure student progress in reading. This set of tools provides a focus on decoding and fluency as well as comprehension. A school should also include other formative or diagnostic assessments that will be used instead of, or in addition to, *mCLASS*® tools so teachers are able to identify students who need added support and intense progress monitoring. The IDOE provides Wireless Generation *mCLASS*® tools to schools free of charge. The plan should also detail any other formative assessment(s) the school plans to use.

A common, end-of-year assessment reflective of ISTEP+ will allow teachers to measure students' knowledge and skills and to determine whether students are "on track" with regard to reading at the end of each grade. The IDOE will provide a summative assessment for schools to use at no charge. The Reading Plan should also detail any other type of summative assessment the school intends to use.

While assessments are important for advancing teaching and learning throughout kindergarten, first and second grade, ISTEP+ at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade year will be the important point at which it is determined whether a student can read proficiently. The IDOE will provide a “reading” score as part of the English/language arts portion of ISTEP+ and include educators in the process of setting reading cut scores (Pass and Pass+).

5. Interventions for students who need extra support to reach reading proficiency

Students must be provided with research-based materials that address deficit areas, as determined by a diagnostic assessment. Instruction in such areas should take place in addition to the 90-minute reading block.

Key principles of Response to Instruction (Rtl) are required as part of each Reading Plan. The IDOE promotes Rtl as a system for assuring that all students achieve their learning goals. Rtl increases student achievement by providing a continuum of instructional support for those students who are struggling to read as well as those who are proficient and need extensions. Students are monitored often to ensure they are progressing as expected, and when they are not, they receive additional learning opportunities.

Rtl in Indiana is differentiated from a process strictly intended to identify students who qualify for special education. If a student continues to struggle after receiving intense, appropriate intervention through first, second and third grade, it may be determined that the student is eligible to receive special education services. However, an effective Rtl system is comprised foremost of components aimed at providing responsive instruction for all students. Reading Plans should include the types of interventions that will be used.

*Optional strategies include the following:*

- an extended school day
- an after-school program with research-based materials and certified teachers to tutor and remediate students
- Saturday school with research-based materials and certified teachers to tutor and remediate students
- an extended school year with research-based materials and certified teachers to tutor and remediate students
- transition classes

6. Details on how decisions to retain students will be made

If a student does not achieve a passing score on the Reading portion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English/language arts ISTEP+ exam, he or she shall be retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. When making the decision to retain, each student’s individual abilities and potential disabilities must be considered.

Therefore, several exemptions exist under which a student will not be retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade:

- Students who have previously been retained two times prior to promotion to grade four (In other words, students can only be retained a maximum of two times in grades K-3 combined.)
- Students with disabilities whose case conference committee has determined that promotion is appropriate
- English Language Learners (ELLs) with a score of Level 3 or less in the Reading domain on the LAS Links English proficiency assessment



7. Instruction and interventions for students who are retained

Once the decision to retain a student has been made, appropriate remediation plans must also be designed. The plan should include the following:

Summer school

Corporations and schools should strongly consider offering summer school as one of a number of remediation strategies for retained students. Summer school ought to be required for students who do not pass the Reading portion of ISTEP+ in 3rd grade. The corporation contact for summer school should create a schedule that facilitates reading intervention. The suggested model incorporates adequate time, research-based intervention programs, effective supplementary materials, and progress monitoring to provide instruction according to student needs. An acceptable summer school program should address suggested instructional time (including the number of weeks, days per week and instructional hours per day) and take into account reading instruction, reading assessment, and reading enrichment.

School corporations and schools are encouraged to choose teachers who are effective in teaching reading skills to struggling students and utilizing expert knowledge to tailor instruction to student needs.

*Summer school curriculum should include the following:*

- SBRR strategies and interventions;
- Curricular materials that are different from the prior year must be provided—this includes a change in supplemental and intervention materials, if applicable;
- Use of a core reading program is not required. The use of a comprehensive reading intervention program is sufficient for reading instruction during summer school;
- Diagnostic assessments may be given to students that are deficient in reading prior to or during summer school to provide insight on the child's needs for instruction; and
- Weekly progress monitoring is adequate to monitor a student's growth and provide instruction based on data.

If a child demonstrates the required reading level before the start of the next school year by re-taking and passing the Reading portion of ISTEP+, he or she may be promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Instruction during the year the student is retained

*Instruction for retained students must include the following:*

- proven, effective teaching strategies and methods designed to meet students' needs
- an effective teacher, as determined by student performance data
- at least 90 minutes of reading instruction each day

In addition to required reading enhancement, acceleration and intervention strategies, the school must provide parents of retained students with at least one of the following instructional options:

- Tutoring before and/or after school
- Parent workshops and a parent-guided home reading program
- A mentor or tutor with specialized reading training (The mentor/tutor option does not require corporations to pay for private tutors. Volunteers or school staff may be used.)
- Extended-day programs
- Supplemental Educational Services



### Additional remediation options

*The school's remediation plan should detail whether the school will employ the following options:*

- an extended school day
- an after-school program with research-based materials and certified teachers to tutor and remediate students
- Saturday school with research-based materials and certified teachers to tutor and remediate students
- an extended school year with research-based materials and certified teachers to tutor and remediate students
- transition classes

8. Provisions for when, and under what circumstances, retained students may be eligible for mid-year promotion

If a child achieves the required reading level during the next school year, the child may be promoted to fourth grade at that time. To be promoted to fourth grade mid-year, the child must demonstrate mastery of the third grade reading skills and beginning fourth grade reading skills. In other words, the student must have made enough progress to be successful in fourth grade. Students should be provided on-grade level work for subject areas that are not at risk. Third-Fourth grade transition classes are an option.

9. Professional development plan focused on the following:

- utilizing assessment data to target the school's goals for reading;
- differentiated for teachers based on classroom data;
- establishing model classrooms within the school;
- job-embedded time for professional development and collaboration; and
- substantial and ongoing progress towards each school's Reading Plan.

10. How schools will monitor the implementation and effectiveness to assure communication among all stakeholders

*The Reading Plan must describe how its implementation will monitor the following:*

- implementation of the Reading Plan at the school and classroom level, including an explanation of assessment and any other student performance data that will be collected, how it will be collected, how it will be reviewed and used to inform instruction, and the frequency of review;
- ensuring fidelity of implementation of all reading programs, strategies and interventions used at the school level and determining appropriate instructional adjustments. Districts must also explain how concerns and corrections are communicated if it is determined that the Reading Plan is not being implemented with fidelity; and
- incorporating reading and literacy instruction into all subject areas, using texts in order to deepen understanding.

11. Details regarding how districts plan to communicate with parents.

The parent of any K-3 student who exhibits a reading deficiency must be notified of the student's deficiency with a description and explanation, understandable to the parent, of the exact nature of the student's difficulty in learning and lack of achievement in reading. What constitutes a deficiency must be addressed in the plan. The parent must be included in the development of a progress-

monitoring plan that is aligned to the state's Rtl document and must be informed that the student will be given intensive reading instruction and intervention until the deficiency is corrected.

*The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading must be notified of the following in writing, as reflected in the Rtl guidance document:*

- that the child has a reading deficiency;
- a description of current and proposed supplemental instructional services provided to the child to remediate the reading deficiency;
- strategies for parents to use in helping their child succeed; and
- that if the child's reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of third grade (such that the student does not pass the Reading portion of ISTEP+), the child should be required to attend summer school and must be retained unless he or she meets the requirements for an exemption.

## **PART III: Fiscal Impact**

### **Reading standards:**

There is no additional fiscal impact to schools as a result of current Indiana Academic Standards. There is also no additional fiscal impact to school corporations as a result of Indiana's adoption of the Common Core State Standards. There may be costs involved in aligning local curriculum and assessments with new standards, but this is an annual process that school corporations in Indiana are already used to. IDOE will provide resources and support documents to help ease schools' transition to the Common Core.

### **Reading Framework:**

There is no additional fiscal impact to schools as a result of the Reading Framework. The Reading Framework will be published online with professional development modules in order to train teachers to implement the framework. Additional professional development may be provided regionally.

### **Reading Plans:**

Writing, adopting and carrying out the reading plans may require some schools to re-allocate money they currently spend on other priorities. Schools must, however, prioritize the goal of all students reading proficiently by the end of third grade above all other priorities. Achieving that goal will make achieving most other corporation and school goals more attainable.

Schools may need to re-allocate resources to fully implement several parts of the Reading Plan. However it is impossible for IDOE to know exactly how those costs will vary from corporation to corporation and from school to school. Below is an estimate of possible re-allocation costs:

- Schools may need to re-allocate resources to pay substitute teacher costs so Reading Leadership Team members may fulfill duties associated with writing, implementing and evaluating the Reading Plan (items 1, 2, 3, 10 and 11 within the Reading Plan). Since the process of writing the Reading Plan will be merged with the current School Improvement Plan process, any new costs might simply result from adding team member(s) whose expertise is reading. In some cases, time may be provided for this work throughout a teacher's day. If substitute time is required, IDOE estimates it would be up to approximately \$70 per day per substitute.

- A school that currently does not have a core reading program that teaches the five components of scientifically-based reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) will need to purchase one. If a school has a core reading program that meets these specifications, there would be no cost. Costs will be covered within the textbook adoption and rental process. The Textbook Adoption Committee will approve a list of recommended core programs aligned with the framework and the Common Core State Standards. Schools which adopt early will be able to continue the use of this core program through the entire next adoption cycle.
- Schools may need to re-allocate remediation funding from current uses to implement interventions for students if they demonstrate a reading deficiency prior to the third grade ISTEP+ or during the third grade year. Options for those interventions are listed in items 5 and 7 of the Reading Plan.
- For students who do not pass the reading portion of the ISTEP+ in third grade, schools are strongly encouraged to remediate during the summer and re-test for proficiency at the completion of summer school. Assuming the student passes the re-test, this will negate the need to remediate for reading in the next school year. IDOE estimates the cost of each summer school teacher to be approximately \$25-\$40 per hour. Schools may use any number of resources to pay for summer school, including the state summer school distribution. IDOE plans to work with the State Board of Education to prioritize summer school for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading in IDOE's summer school reimbursement formula. Schools may also continue to use Title I funds to pay for summer school.
- If schools choose to offer summer school, they may need to re-allocate resources to provide transportation and/or to provide summer meals. Schools can investigate participating in federal summer food programs.
- If a school must retain students, the focus should be on the legislatively-mandated reading skills. There should be no additional costs incurred for remediating other areas that the student may have already mastered (i.e., science, math, social studies, etc). Remediation for reading will require a trained teacher or intervention provider. Schools may already have appropriate staff, but depending on numbers and grade levels served, additional staff hours may be required, which could necessitate a reallocation of funds or services. In schools with a high concentration of retained students, the teacher who would have received those students as 4<sup>th</sup> graders may be reassigned to teach an additional 3<sup>rd</sup> grade section. If a small number of students are retained, they can simply be absorbed back into the existing 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes.
- Schools may want to re-allocate Title I and Title II resources used for professional development to help meet the requirements of the plan. Comprehensive evaluation of current usage of Title monies would allow for the professional development of current and existing staff to meet new requirements.

#### Duration of 2010

- The IDOE will work with educators throughout the year to develop materials and assist schools and school corporations in understanding their responsibilities under this new law.

#### Spring 2011

- School corporations will submit their schools' Reading Plans.
- The IDOE will pilot the Reading portion of ISTEP+ and set cut scores.

#### 2011-2012 School Year

- All Reading Plan interventions and requirements go into effect.

#### Summer 2012

- If a student does not pass the Reading portion of ISTEP+ in 2012, he or she should be strongly encouraged to attend summer school.

#### 2012-2013 School Year

- Students who do not pass the Reading portion of ISTEP+ and who do not meet one of the exemptions must be retained.